



Advocating for Equity and Diversity throughout Oregon

Chair Neron, Vice Chairs Wright and Hudson, and members of the House Education Committee,

The Oregon Advocacy Commissions (OACs) – the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific and Islander Affairs (OCAPIA), Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA), Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs (OCHA), and the Oregon Commission for Women (OCFW) – eagerly urge the Committee to support the passage of HB 2281, which would require school districts and public charter schools to designate civil rights coordinators.

Each Commission works for the implementation and establishment of social, political, economic, and legal equity for their constituent populations in the state of Oregon. Each Commission has several statutory duties, all of which revolve around advocacy and equity.

A 2019 study on The Impact of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health by the American Academy of Pediatrics states that *“Although progress has been made toward racial equality and equity,⁹ the evidence to support the continued negative impact of racism on health and well-being through implicit and explicit biases, institutional structures, and interpersonal relationships is clear.¹⁰ Failure to address racism will continue to undermine health equity for all children, adolescents, emerging adults, and their families.”*

The Government Accountability Office found that in the 2018-2019 school year, roughly 5.2 million students aged 12 to 18 were bullied. Of these, one in four complaints listed the reason being for their race, national origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation – protected classes under OAR 839.

The rise of a global health pandemic brought with it another crisis: skyrocketing anti-Asian hate crimes and discrimination. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) documented a 77% increase from 2019 to 2020 of hate crimes committed against Asian Americans. Stop AAPI Hate notes an increase in seniors being targeted, an increase in physical assault, and women accounting for nearly two-thirds of these incidents, among other findings.

In the same time period, Oregon averaged 141 bias incidents and crimes per month, with Black people accounting for roughly one-third of all victims, as reported by the Oregon Department of Justice.

A 2022 study by the National Institute of Justice found that anti-immigrant sentiment is a “substantial driver” of Latino victimization and has only increased in recent years. A key finding

Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

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<https://www.oregonadvocacy.org/>

503.302.9725

oaco.mail@oregon.gov

PO Box 17550, Portland, OR 97217

indicated the significant negative mental health consequences of experiencing bias-motivated incidents based on one's ethnicity or national origin. It also found that Latinos also have greater fear when engaging with law enforcement as well as other formal institutions, thus a much lower reporting rate than other immigrant communities.

The situation has become so dire that Oregon's students are fed up and staging walkouts, speaking at board meetings, and even suing school districts, as reported by CNN, which explicitly mentioned the Tigard-Tualatin school district.

Other states including our neighbors to the north, Washington, have already implemented similar policies across their school districts. It is imperative that Oregon take similar steps to protect all students – especially those of already-vulnerable populations.

Implementation of school-based civil rights coordinators would create healthier learning environments for our students, remove the burden that currently sits on the desks of our overworked educators by directing it to trained professionals, and improve the long term wellbeing of Oregon's future. Our constituents deserve to have added support within hostile environments.

The Oregon Advocacy Commissions strongly urge the Committee to support the passage of HB 2281.


Sincerely,



Jacqueline Leung
Co-Chair, OCAPIA



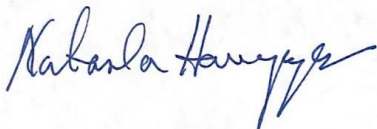
Sam Phan
Co-Chair, OCAPIA



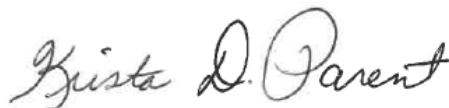
Jessica Price
Chair, OCBA



Melina Moran
Chair, OCHA




Natasha Haunsperger
Co-Chair, OCFW




Dr. Krista Parent
Co-Chair, OCFW



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